

his honorable discharge. The ceremony was attended by my good friend and colleague, Congressman BOB STUMP, Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee; Mr. Rudy de Leon, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Admiral Jim Loy, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; and Mr. George Searle, National President, American Merchant Marine Veterans. I would like to thank them for participating in the ceremony and acknowledging the service of Mr. Breaux, Mr. Hoomes, and Mr. Katusa, and the role that these, and all, Merchant Marine veterans played in preserving freedom.

As we mark National Maritime Day, it is important to note that our country's Merchant Mariners continue to stand ready to serve. In fact, the leaders of the major maritime labor unions—the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association; the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots; the National Maritime Union of America; the American Maritime Officers; and the Seafarers International Union of North America—recently expressed their readiness to support America's military effort in the Balkans. Recent reports that Greek seamen are refusing to support that effort is a reminder of why the United States requires its own highly capable Merchant Marine.

Mr. President, I will treasure that patch of "Battlin' Pete" from the Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II. It will always remind me of the importance of National Maritime Day, and of the sacrifices that America's Merchant Mariner veterans have made in the service of their country. For those who braved the Murmansk run; for those who served through the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf; for those who today stand ready to sail into harm's way with our Armed Forces; we salute you on this day.

EXPRESSION ON VOTES

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I regret that due to family business which took me out of the country, I was unable to cast several recorded votes during yesterday's session. While my vote would not have altered the outcome of any of the motions, I would like to express how I would have voted had I been able:

On vote No. 120, a Cloture Motion regarding the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 96, Y2K liability legislation. I would have voted "AYE." It is high time we move to consideration of this important legislation. The turn of the millennium is fast approaching and we must work to protect our citizens and businesses against harmful litigation that benefits no one.

On vote No. 121, amendment numbered 351 to S. 254 offered by Senator ALLARD regarding memorials in public schools, I would have voted "AYE." This amendment will allow students and faculty members to grieve for classmates and colleagues killed on

school property in a way that makes them most comfortable.

On vote No. 122, an amendment numbered 352 to S. 254 offered by Senators KOHL and HATCH regarding mandatory safety locks on guns, I would have voted "AYE." This amendment was an example of the importance of bipartisan compromise. The Kohl-Hatch amendment requires all handguns sold or transferred by a licensed dealer to be sold with a locking device. In addition, this amendment provides important liability protections for gun owners who use these safety devices.

On vote No. 13, an amendment numbered 353 to S. 254 offered by Senators HATCH and FEINSTEIN I would have voted "AYE." This important amendment increased penalties for participating in a crime as a gang member; makes it illegal to travel or use the mail for gang business; makes it illegal to transfer firearms to children to commit a crime; makes it illegal to clone pagers; prohibits the distribution of certain information relating to explosives or destructive devices; makes it illegal to wear body armor in the commission of a crime and donates surplus body armor to local Law enforcement agencies; and strengthens penalties for Eco-terrorism.

On vote No. 124, an amendment to S. 254 offered by Senator BYRD I would have voted "AYE." This amendment allows states to enforce their own alcoholic beverage control laws by allowing state prosecutors to bring an injunction in Federal Court if interstate shippers violate State laws.

HEALTH AND THE AMERICAN CHILD

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, yesterday I met with former Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, who now chairs the prestigious Public Health Policy Advisory Board (PHPAB). Dr. Sullivan presented to me their new report entitled "Health and the American Child: A Focus on the Mortality Among Children."

I was immediately struck by the fact that the findings of the PHPAB report underscore both the need for the legislation we are debating here today and the tremendous importance we must place on prevention efforts so that we can reduce unnecessary deaths of our Nation's youth.

According to "Health and the American Child," in the past two decades, two causes of child death have dramatically increased—homicide and suicide, which account for 14% and 7% respectively of all deaths for children under age 19. In teenage black males, the levels are so striking that the report uses the term "epidemic" to describe an eight-fold increase in homicide rates among African American youth, now their number one cause of death.

"Homicide and suicide, the greatest new risks to children's health today, require both heightened preventive ac-

tion as well as research into children's mental health and the social fabric in which they grow and develop." And that is precisely what we have been talking about during our debate on S. 254.

The PHPAB report goes on to define the contributing risk factors associated with mortality in children. Homicide and suicide, as the major killers of our children, are most closely associated with firearms, drug and alcohol use, and motor vehicles. These significant increases in both morbidity and mortality among our youth must be addressed and demand aggressive preventive action on our part.

I commend "Health and the American Child" to my colleagues and would be glad to make it available to any Senators who care to have the benefit of its considerable findings. "Health and the American Child" is really a call to action. It shows so dramatically why this bill we are debating today is important, and why we must set partisan rhetoric aside to get this legislation passed and enacted.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE ACT

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, on March 17, of this year the Senate passed S. 257, the National Missile Defense Act of 1999, by a vote of 97-3. Subsequently, the House adopted as H.R. 4 a different version of the legislation, and today the House has agreed to the substance of the Senate bill. No further action is required on the bill, and it now goes to the President for his signature.

After many years of debate, Congress has passed legislation stating the national policy to be that the United States will deploy a national missile defense as soon as technologically possible.

Section 2 of the bill notes that, like all discretionary programs, national missile defense is subject to the authorization and appropriation of funds.

Section 3 states that we support the continued reductions in Russian nuclear force levels. There is no linkage between Russian nuclear force levels, or any arms control agreement, and the national missile defense deployment policy of the bill.

I urge the President to sign this bill and put to rest the concerns of many that our country would continue its vulnerability to ballistic missile attack. With the signing of this bill, a new era of commitment to missile defense will begin.

TRADE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to address an issue of critical importance to the domestic lamb industry and to producers in my home state of Wyoming. In September 1998, a coalition of individuals from all segments of the U.S. lamb industry filed a Section 201 trade petition with the U.S. International Trade Commission under laws